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# The Nation

## In Summary

### What the C.I.A. Is Willing To Disclose

The Ford Administration has reversed itself and told the House Select Committee on Intelligence the approximate size of the nation's intelligence budget without explanation.

The committee members are not the first legislators to learn the figure, which was disclosed to them in secret session by Central Intelligence Agency Director William E. Colby. Intelligence officials have customarily accounted for their total expenditure to members of House and Senate subcommittees on armed services and appropriations as part of the annual budgetary process. Intelligence agencies do not, however, submit a line-item budget, as do other Government departments, and the funds are hidden in various parts of the defense appropriation.

The committee has so far been unsuccessful in persuading the Defense Department to provide the document which created the National Security Agency. Rejecting the arrangement that had been accepted by its Senate counterpart, to view the document on Government premises, the committee voted to subpoena it. The House committee members are apparently less concerned than the Senators that the investigation will get bogged down in court battles over the validity of subpoenas.

## Mail-Intercepts

The effect of the congressional investigations on current intelligence operations has evidently begun to worry the President, who mentioned the case of Portugal. He implied that the intelligence agencies had felt inhibited about supplying correct financial and other assistance to non-Communist elements in that country.

Justice Department lawyers who have investigated the mail-opening activities of the Central Intelligence Agency (and concluded that the agency broke the law) may now have to review a similar operation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Agents of the F.B.I. apparently began their own program of opening and photographing foreign and domestic mail in the United States around 1958. The letters that were scrutinized, primarily in New York City and Washington, D.C., covered correspondence addressed to and from official Soviet-bloc groups in the United States. Such "mail-intercept" programs, conducted without a search warrant, violate Federal statutes that protect the privacy of first-class mail.

The bureau has revealed to congressional investigators that it is spending \$82.5 million a year on intelligence activities and counter-espionage.